

REFUGE REMINDER

PSALM 62:5-8 MARCH 21, 2018

Psalms 62, verse 5 is where we'll begin this evening. I invite you to follow along so we all can not only *hear* these beautiful words, but see them with our own eyes, right there in black and white, addressed to each of us.

I was realizing the other day that most of us, from a very young age, are trained to keep in mind certain places of refuge that we might need to flee to in a given situation. In school we had fire drills and each class would go to a specific place somewhere on campus. If an earthquake hits, where's the refuge we've been told to go to? Under the door frame. Here's kind of a reversed one: During a lightning storm, where is the place you should *not* go for shelter? Under that big oak tree.

We even make a game out of finding the best place to take refuge, the best place to hide: Hide and go seek. It's always fun to play with kids because they're often not aware of how easy it is to see them. But it made me think: Kids have the smallness and flexibility to get into the best hiding places, but they don't know about them! The adults know the spots where they would *never* be found if they just were 2 feet shorter and 100 pounds lighter.

I find the great fortress refuges of history fascinating. There's the famous Rock of Gibraltar. Back in the 16th century, Britain enhanced the medieval structures there and fortified the top of the rock. Over centuries, defenses were improved, caves and passages were carved into it for storage and armaments and troop movements.¹ There's also the Fort of Chittor, covering 700 acres on top of a 590 foot tall hill in India. It was built back in the 7th century with "seven gateways guarded by a watch tower and iron-spiked doors...40 percent of the fort's space was covered by water at one time—enough of a reservoir to hold about one billion gallons of water and, with rainfall, [sufficient] to maintain an army of 50,000 for four years without fear of thirst."²

Psalms 62 is a song about *refuge*. Written by David and dedicated to his friend, Jeduthun, it proclaims the absolute security found in the Lord. And, as we saw last time, it was written from *within* that refuge. David wasn't theorizing or writing up some fairy tale. He was living out the lyrics, as enemies kept trying to take him down and destroy him. Yet, there he is, harp in hand, secure and satisfied in his God.

Tonight, in the second stanza of the Psalm, we'll see David continue his refuge anthem. And he'll do so in two parts. First: he preaches to himself a *reminder*, and then second: he preaches to us a *recommendation*.

The reminder is the majority of our passage, verses 5 through 7.

Psalm 62:5 - ⁵My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation *is* from Him.

Verses 5 and 6 are very similar to verses 1 and 2, with a few careful changes. The biggest difference is who the words are aimed at. In the first stanza of the song, David is revealing what he knows to be true about God and it doesn't have a particular audience. It's sort of broadcast for whoever comes across this song. Here in verse 5 we see him actually direct the message *inward* and remind *himself*

¹ <https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/g2441/the-worlds-20-most-impressive-fortresses/>

² *ibid.*

to keep believing the Lord and to keep doing what he's already been doing. He had said at the beginning, "Truly, here's what my soul does." And now he says, "Hey, soul, *keep doing that!*"

Spirit-filled Christians preach to themselves. They go to the Word, see what God has revealed, and then believe that truth and go on *reminding* themselves about what God has said and what it means for our lives. This is important for at least two reasons: We're prone to fail and we're prone to forget.

Think of guys like Peter and John. Even late into their lives, as apostles, they were still, of course, imperfect. They had moments of failure. Paul had to rebuke Peter in front of a bunch of people. At one point the Apostle John, as he's seeing the visions recorded in Revelation, in the *last chapter* of the Bible, falls down to worship at the feet of an angel. And the angel has to say, "Whoa, see that you don't do that!" That regular preaching of God's Word to ourselves helps us to overcome our propensity to fail.

Psalm 119:11 - ¹¹Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

But we also preach to ourselves because we are prone to forget. This was something the disciples struggled with a lot in the Gospels. As did the Children of Israel there in the wilderness. In times of strain or tragedy or suffering, we tend to find ourselves forgetting what we know to be true about the love of God and the power of God. And, especially in those situations, we should take our cue from David, who preached about the great refuge found in God.

He says in verse 5: "My expectation is from Him." From who? Well, from God. David uses here the name *Elohim*. In this Psalm he uses that name every time you see the word *God*. One of the stand outs in the name Elohim is that it's a plural word, which speaks to us of the Trinity. Reminding us that we should *expect* to receive the ministry of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father, accomplishing His will and purposes for our lives and this world. God the Son, being our Advocate and our Great High Priest, our King and our Head. God the Holy Spirit, our Helper and the One who fills us with power and who intercedes on our behalf. We can *expect* all this ministry because these are things that God has promised to do. And, in addition to all of that, we learn from the Bible that, as Christians, we can *expect* to receive a new identity in Christ, power for service, a message to proclaim, we expect the Lord to continue His process of sanctification in us, and to give us freedom and giftings and callings. We expect His coming Kingdom, where we will rule and reign with Him. We have so many things we should be waiting for with expectation. So, the Christian life should be characterized by *hopefulness*. The kind of excited anticipation that David had.

He continues in verse 6:

Psalm 62:6 - ⁶He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *He is* my defense; I shall not be moved.

Now, here's what I want to point out about this verse: It's a direct copy from verse 2 with *one* adjustment: David pulled out the word "greatly". In verse 2 he said, "I shall not be *greatly* moved." Here, he's even *more* optimistic: "I shall not be moved!" And, remember, this is *after* he reveals the incessant attacks he's enduring from men within his own administration.

He had looked down from the strong tower, there at the unbelievers trying to scale the wall to take his life, and he looked around at the power of his God and David said, "You can't get me!" And he reminds himself that *God is his salvation. God is his rock. Elohim will defend. And not only will he not be caused to stumble, he's not going to move at all!*

And then, in verse 7, he continues this line of thinking and expands past what he had said back in verses 1 and 2.

Psalm 62:7 - ⁷In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, *And* my refuge, is in God.

Twice he explains that this security is found *IN* God. The strength and shelter and salvation that we need to live out this life is found by abiding *IN* Jesus Christ. Now, David didn't know the name of the Savior, but we do. It's Jesus Christ. And when we abide in His love, we are able to do what could never be done on our own. We will bear fruit. We will endure. We will overcome sin. And we will become conduits of the truth and the love of God.

David understood that salvation was not found in any pile of wealth or program, it's found in a Person. *In God* is our salvation and our refuge. But, notice, we not only escape by the skin of our teeth, in God is also our *glory*. It would be one thing to be saved out of a burning house, with nothing but the clothes on our backs. We'd be glad for our lives, but the Lord goes so much further and then says, "Now come into *My* household and receive *My* inheritance and be part of *My* Body and by the time I'm done with you, you're going to be absolutely, perfectly glorified in heaven."

David would have us remember that it is in God *alone* that this hope is found. We talked about this last week. A major emphasis in this song is the word *only*. God only. God alone. No other source. No other name. Only Jesus. He is our God and there is no one else.

So, David has a pretty great little sermon here. He preaches that reminder to his own heart. Now, in verse 8, he preaches a *recommendation* to the rest of us. Because, having heard what he's said in verses 5 through 7, the only *rational* response from everyone else is: "How do I get in on that?" David gives us his recommendation.

Psalm 62:8 - ⁸Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

There are two specific directives in this line. If we want to enjoy the salvation of God we should trust in Him and pour out our hearts before Him. Now, these aren't the only 2 components to a relationship with Christ, but it's what we have in front of us this evening.

Trusting in the Lord is a big topic in the Bible. A few weeks ago, looking at the second stanza of Psalm 39, we talked specifically about how trusting the Lord is an active expression of faith. So I don't want to rehash that. But if we want to know more about what trusting God looks like, the Psalms are a great place to start mining. There are at least 50 different references to this idea in the Psalter. But, generally speaking, we know that to trust someone is to believe what we're told about them and then to place our confidence in them. David describes it as *resting* on God. To rely on Him and to anchor all the weight of our lives onto His firm foundation.

In New Testament terms it means to walk by faith. To believe that God is doing what He has promised to do *and* that we are who He says we are. That we have received His everlasting life. That we can let the mind of Christ dwell in us richly. That we are His workmanship and that He has prepared for us a life to live in His service. We trust God by presenting ourselves as living sacrifices for His pleasure and then by making ourselves subordinate to His will and His principles. That's trusting God.

And then David encourages us to pour out our hearts before the Lord. And it speaks to us of the tender access the Lord grants us as His people. We can bare all our minds and all our souls to this God. In fact, that's what He *wants* us to do. And when we can't even articulate what's going on in our hearts, He gives us the Holy Spirit to interpret our groans. This isn't just some mechanical, *transactional* relationship to buy a ticket to heaven. The Lord has given us intimacy and real communion with Him and He invites us to come into His presence any time, day or night. He is a *refuge* for us. A place of shelter and help. He's our hope and our safe haven. Our hiding place. Our home. A *mighty* fortress is our God!

As we close tonight, I'd like us to notice one more thing about this stanza. So far in the song, David has talked a lot about the Lord, a little about his enemies. He's shared some thoughts about himself. But we see that he's also thinking about others. He's thinking about you and me too. He says there in verse 8: "You people." And "your heart." And, "God is a refuge *for us*." As far as David was concerned, there was plenty of room in the fortress for everyone who would call on the name of the Lord and David was inviting them in to enjoy it with him.

From our New Testament perspective, we can even take this a step further. Because we learn from Jesus and the Apostles that not only are we permitted *into* the refuge and we invite others to join us, we are to be part *of* the refuge. The Lord is still our refuge, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, but then it's revealed that we are now His Body on the earth. We are living stones, being built up and growing together as a spiritual house. Paul says that through this work we become "members of one another".³ We're built on the foundation of Christ and now He fits us together so that we can do His work and accomplish His ministry. And so, you and I become part of the supply chain of God's salvation. We are strengthened by God to stand like the Rock of Gibraltar, a place where people can come for help and shelter and comfort. We become like the Fort of Chittor, as we are sources of Christ's living water, that flows out of us as we minister to others.

So, these verses not only remind us of our access, but also our opportunity to be strengthened and let God's glory shine in us, to proclaim the refuge found in Christ and to be part of that refuge.

"A mighty fortress is our God. His truth to triumph through us." Let's enjoy that access and those opportunities as we live out our lives according to the Word of God.

³ Romans 12:5